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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000453

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2013

TAGS: PREL MARR TU IZ KS

SUBJECT: KOREAN TROOPS TO NORTHERN IRAQ: NEED TO BRIEF PM
ERDOGAN BEFORE HIS FEB 7 VISIT TO SEOUL

REF: A) 03 SEOUL 6133 B) ANKARA 361 C) ANKARA 362

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons: 1.5 (B and D).

¶1. (U) This is an action request. See para 4.

¶2. (C) DCM confirmed January 22 that PM Erdogan will travel to Seoul to meet with Korean officials February 7.

¶3. (C) PM Erdogan may already know (possibly from information obtained by the Turkish military liaison officers stationed in northern Iraq) that ROK troops intend to deploy to Kirkuk in April 2004 (ref a). Given the high degree of concern expressed by the GOT, including the PM, about Kirkuk developments, we expect the ROK deployment and Turkish concerns to be part of the discussions with ROK officials during the PM's visit.

¶4. (C) Action request: Given the Turkish sensitivities surrounding northern Iraq (Kirkuk in particular), we recommend that we receive instructions to brief the GOT on the deployment of Korean troops to northern Iraq. We also recommend that Washington provide guidance for Embassy Seoul on the status of and our political efforts in the Kirkuk area to share with ROK officials. We should also brief them on Turkish concerns about recent Iraqi Kurdish efforts to gain maximum advantage for their region and Kirkuk therein (refs b-c). We need to ensure that the information conveyed to Erdogan by Korean officials reflects an understanding of the positions we have conveyed to the GOT and is consistent with the information the PM receives during his meetings in Washington.

¶5. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN